5/28/69

Senator Charles McC. Mathias
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mac,

Sorry to hear you again have a lingering health problem. You are doing the right thing to try and rest. Besides, that gives you a chance to catch up on your reading. Too bad I didn't know in time to let you have three limited editions, on a subject you apparently fear.

Your positions on the ABM and job corps are good.

I am writing to ask some help if it involves no personal cost for you. Some stories have appeared in the Memphis papers that did not appear elsewhere. They have not responded to my requests for copies. There was a spectacular duplication of what happened in Dallas immediately after King was murdered. There were false radio broadcasts. The papers printed lengthy of the transcripts (they were taped). A friend of mine who was in Memphis at the time of the murder (and intervriewed a number of witnesses- you should hear the tapes!) first told me of this. Neither the prosecutor nor the FBI nor the FCC has ever done anything about this violation of law and the explanations do not stack up. One of the three limited editions deals with this murder. I am writing an addition for which I want these transcripts. But if the Library of Congress charges you personally for copies of newspaper stories, do not get them. The net effect was to lead the police in the wrong direction.

There is a clamp on all of this in the government. Your administration has made, I think, an enormous blunder in not learning, when it could, of the situation in which it was. Instead of discovering that it was off the hook, that Ramsey Clark had delivered himself and removed the onus of a five-man Republican majority on the Warren Commission, it permitted the same operating people to persuade them of the same mistakes, everyone taking everyone else on faith, no one seeking to learn for himself what he should believe. I suppose this is one of the built-in evils and weaknesses of government. It is a blunder I think they will regret, for time is running on their own innocence. I get no responses to proper requests from the Justice Department, for example. I ask for access to public records and they do not reply at all. Here I refer to papers they produced in court, part of the court record.

I'd like you, when you can, to phone Dr. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States, to tell him I have complained to you or a deliberate slow-down in responding to my requests for copies of the files, for which I pay. They are never answered for at least two months. My last response, of a few days ago, deals with some of the unresponded-to requests of last year. He is a carryover. Yet, when I wrote (in a book) that the Johnson administration saw to it that this archive was understaffed, having but two men who had pre-existing obligationso the Archivist denied they were short of help.

Appropos of your own fine position of financial disclosures, Dr. Russell Fisher and through him our State are again involved in another of the assassination scandals, through money compromised. Fisher accepted appointment to a panel Clark convoked secretly. They wrote a shameful "report" which is but unalloyed propaganda. I personally welcome it because it unbagged the sacked cats (one of the things I had hoped you'd be interested in reading). Clark kept it secret for a year, then released it under the most dubious circumstances, entirely misrepresenting it, what it really said and what he had even asked of the panel. I did an immediate book on it, in a limited edition only. From it I learn that the President's wounds were not at all as described, and much more. Fisher apparently whipped the doubting lawyers of the Department of Justice into line, believe it or not. I can disclose my source and information to you only in confidence and in person, if you are interested. He also appears to have actually dominated the panel. If you have any relationship with him, I encourage you to caution, for despite his well-earned eminence, he is now dangerous. This cannot be long suppressed and when it is he will join Clark as a self-appointed goat.

In connection with this, I have been told that he is the beneficiary of considerable Federal largess and seeks more, which certainly compromise him. I would like to know the detsils of grants to him and the University, on whose medical-school staff he is. Can you please get this for me? I want to put it in the appendix to that book.

I'm sorry you do not want to see what I have offered to show you. I think, ultimately, you will be sorry too, for I will not, as you know, harrass you to do something or chide you for not doing it. I think it is knowledge you should have and I want nothing done with any of it, publicly, until I can arrange for general availability of the books. I want to add to them first anyway. There may be ways in which this knowledge can be a personal benefit to you. It reflects on only one Republican, and he is a minor one, but the reflection on the Democratic administration, that is something else. If, during your convalescence, you are here again and change your mind, phone me. I'm almost always home. I'll be in Baltimore the third and Washington the 13th. Otherwise, I have no plans for leaving. If the boys are with you, they may enjoy it here. The rabbits do no run away, we have all sorts of birds, and the fish in the pond come up to be fed. They may be interested in knowing I fed a pair of Mallards during the winter. They hatched 15 young here and immediately took the ducklings not to the pond but to the swimming pool. Once in it the young could not get out. I have some pictures of this. I finally had to rescue them. First, however, to keep them from waterlogging and drowning, I had to teach them to ride a boat, sort of. I put boards into the pool and they got on them to eat and dry off when they had to. I have movies of this.

Our best regards to all of you. Hope you recover your strength soon. And thanks for anything you can do.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg